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SUBJECT: NOVEMBER 2009 U.S.-AZERBAIJAN SECURITY DIALOGUE

Classified By: PM A/S Andrew J. Shapiro for reasons 1.4(b) and 1.4(d)

Summary: 1. (C) Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs Andrew Shapiro hosted Azerbaijan Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov and an interagency delegation for the 11th annual bilateral Security Dialogue on November 4. DAS Tina Kaidanow and DASD Celeste Wallander also participated (full list of delegates in para. 25 below). Discussion focused on Afghanistan, European security, Iran, missile defense, critical energy infrastructure protection, border security, nonproliferation, and counter-terrorism. No progress was made on the key issues of Leahy vetting or Azerbaijan's agreement to an Afghanistan Train and Equip (TEP) evaluation. End Summary.

Opening Statements

¶2. (C) A/S Shapiro thanked Azerbaijan for its contributions in Afghanistan and Iraq and for its cooperation on counterterrorism. He called Azerbaijan a friend and strategic partner and reaffirmed that the United States supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov said Azerbaijani delegation topics included the future of the Corfu Process and the U.S. strategy for Afghanistan. He asked for more information about the U.S. Administration's strategy for Azerbaijan. On Nagorno-Karabakh, he said he is concerned about prospects for N-K, but acknowledged that it was not an agenda topic for discussion. He added that Azerbaijan is looking for an increased effort from the United States on N-K, not only by intensity but also by level of engagement. He concluded by noting that Azerbaijan still awaits the appointment of a new U.S. Ambassador.

Afghanistan

¶3. (C) Colonel Doug Sachs, Defense Attache at Embassy Baku, briefed on the U.S. request to send a TEP assessment team to Baku in mid-November. Sachs explained the purpose and goals of an assessment team, and that the visit of the team to Baku would create no obligations for Azerbaijan. DASD Wallander, who visited Baku on November 23, stated that accepting an assessment team is only a first step in the decision-making process. EUR DAS Tina Kaidanow referred to her positive conversations in Baku with President Aliyev and Foreign Minister Mammadyarov on TEP and said that TEP would be a welcome step for bilateral relations.

¶4. (C) Azimov was critical of U.S. efforts in Afghanistan. He called for a new ideology in Afghanistan, claiming that the only ideologies forwarded now come from al-Qaida and the local security forces. Kai Eide, he said, while good with white papers for Europe, is not fit for the region. Azimov, who was recently in Afghanistan, said that the local population spoke more positively of Russia than the United States. The Government of Azerbaijan (GOAJ) is ready to offer border training to Afghanistan, but has not received a response from the Afghans, and Azimov asked for U.S. help in getting more information.

¶15. (C) Azimov expressed concerns over the TEP, which he called a "multi-faceted issue," claiming TEP came to us after the Georgia experience, which was not effective. Allocation of resources also must also be considered because Azerbaijan is expecting at any time renewal of hostilities with Armenia. Finally, Azimov noted the GOAJ has no security guarantees. Azimov then laid out two conditions for a positive response on the TEP assessment: 1) the mission should not be limited only to Afghanistan. Instead, the assessment could be for deployment anywhere, even a "joint peacekeeping mission with Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh;" and, 2) accepting the assessment team should not create any commitments. A/S Shapiro and DASD Wallander assured Azimov that the assessment would be only a first step and would not imply additional commitments. However, DAS Kaidanow pointed to the problematic political implications of having an open ended assessment. Colonel Sachs noted that funding for the TEP would come from sources dedicated to missions in Afghanistan.

¶16. (C) Colonel Sachs also briefed on the Northern Distribution Network (NDN), and highlighted the pending U.S. request for an assessment of the Heydar Aliyev airport. Azimov answered that NDN has had both positive and negative results to date. He said that Azerbaijani businesses, encouraged by talk of commercial opportunities created by NDN, have been disappointed as they have now been told that their products are substandard and all purchasing is being done from US firms. In addition, Azimov raised the issue of overflight clearance for NATO Airborne Warning and Control (AWAC). He said that AWAC overflight creates security concerns for Azerbaijan and added that regional (i.e. Russian and Iranian) reactions have been discussed but not resolved.

Anti-Terrorism and Missile Defense

¶17. (C) Shari Villarosa, Deputy Coordinator for Counterterrorism (S/CT), expressed Secretary Clinton's gratitude to Azerbaijan for convicting two senior Hezbollah operatives. Villarosa discussed critical energy infrastructure and urged Azerbaijan's attendance at an upcoming security critical infrastructure workshop hosted by the OSCE in Vienna.

¶18. (C) Azimov began his response by calling for more intelligence cooperation. He again added that a new ideology is needed. Media outlets like CNN, he claimed, create allels between Islam and terrorism. He also briefly noted Azerbaijan's innovations on financial intelligence, cooperating with the U.S. and others internationally. Major General Ali Shafiyev, Deputy Minister of National Security, briefed on Azerbaijan's anti-terrorism achievements from 2007-2009, a period in which seven terrorist groups were neutralized and 130 detained, according to Shafiyev. He briefly commented on an increase in drug trafficking networks and transnational crime in Azerbaijan's occupied territories.

¶19. (C) Major-General Farhad Tagizadeh, Deputy Chief of the State Border Service, provided statistics on drug seizures in Azerbaijan, and noted that 90-95% of the drugs transit their territory from Iran. In 2008, the GOAJ seized 965 kilos of drugs, with 85 people detained. He expressed Azerbaijan's desire to receive actual technical support and equipment that our American counterparts have, such as night vision goggles.

¶10. (C) VCI DAS Frank Rose briefed on the U.S. missile defense strategy. Rose said that the Administration's strategy reflects an assessment that the threat from Iran's short and medium range missiles currently exceeds the threat of its long range missiles, adding that no decision has been made on the possible use of Gabala, but that any decision will be made in close consultation with the GOAJ. Azimov responded that the Gabala lease expires in 2012 and that

Azerbaijan would like to have a better sense of the U.S. plans for Gabala before negotiations begin with the Russians, possibly in 2010. He also asked to see the U.S. assessment of Gabala, which he said was done in 2008.

NATO-Euro-Atlantic Integration

¶11. (C) Azimov noted Russia's proposed European Security Treaty was an important subject for Azerbaijan and for all non-aligned countries in the grey zone between NATO and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). He expressed concern over Russian attempts to expand its sphere of influence, saying that they threaten non-aligned countries like Azerbaijan. He disparaged the inadequate reaction of the West to Russia's proposals for a European Security Treaty and raised the specter of the resurrection of "bloc to bloc" dynamics, particularly if formal NATO - CSTO relations were to be established in the future. In the absence of Article V security guarantees, he suggested Azerbaijan should be provided security "commitments" or assurances through NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program. Azimov criticized the idea of a big tent meeting of the five Secretaries) General of NATO, CSTO, CIS, EU, and OSCE. EUR/RPM's Mike Carpenter responded by noting that Russia's European Security Treaty proposal lacks specificity but that the U.S. fully supports a broad dialogue on improving European security in the OSCE, with its cross-dimensional and comprehensive concept of security. He added that the U.S. values existing European security institutions and does not want to see them overhauled.

¶12. (C) Azimov said that the GOAJ has heard from USNATO that the NATO Ministerial statement this year may not contain its usual language on territorial integrity, which he warned would be viewed as a very negative sign by Azerbaijan. He pushed for U.S. participation in a November 19-20 conference on the NATO Strategic Concept at the NATO International School in Baku. Unfortunately, he said, Azerbaijan can host a bunch of conferences but it does not bring us closer, adding that PfP is not capable of the challenge. He suggested that the U.S. consider a subordinate junior partnership bringing partners to a more secure partnership, if not security guarantees, more bilateral cooperation.

Iran

¶13. (C) Advisor to P Ambassador Stephen Mull participated in the executive lunch, which focused on Iran and regional relations. Azimov and Ambassador Yashar Aliyev, however, used part of the discussion to raise Azerbaijan's complaints regarding Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act (the restrictions on assistance to Azerbaijan which require a yearly waiver). On Iran, Azimov said that the Iranians want to cancel the visa regime with Azerbaijan, an idea opposed by the GOAJ. He spoke at some length on Azerbaijan's exclave Nakhchivan and Azerbaijan's gas arrangement with Iran for the region. According to Azimov, while Azerbaijan is complying with the current sanction regime on Iran, they are concerned that additional sanctions might negatively effect its existing arrangements for Nakhchivan. Azimov volunteered to the U.S. delegation that President Aliyev is ready to speak with President Obama about acting as an interlocutor with Iran.

Caspian Maritime Security

¶14. (C) Azimov led the discussion and stated that the Ministry of Emergency Services is drafting a report on Azerbaijan's Caspian strategic concerns, ranging from environmental security to security cooperation with neighboring states. He said that the process is not going well and that he was not prepared to discuss the results. Azimov, alluding to Iran, said that we are concerned about the policies of some of our neighbors and their unilateral approaches.

¶15. (C) Major Tagizadeh of the State Border Service said that Azerbaijan has made progress on Caspian maritime security since 2005 with the establishment of the Border Security Service,s base, the acquisition of cutters, and the establishment of several divisions for Caspian Sea forces. In reference to Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) and Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) programs, he said that the success has come through implementation of programs on the Caspian Sea. According to Tagizadeh, Azerbaijan is prepared &to participate in security with whatever party invites us to participate in maneuvers.⁸ He reported that Russian, Kazakh, and Iranian Coast Guards meet often and that they wish to engage Turkmenistan.

¶16. (C) Major General Beydullayev, Head of the Inspections Department at the Ministry of Defense, detailed MOD contributions to maritime security efforts. He reported that Azerbaijan is seeking additional assistance for Unit 641 and for de-mining efforts. He also underlined Azerbaijan,s need for additional equipment for counterterrorism, major renovations to engines, weapons navigation systems, underwater systems, and sonar systems. Radars do not cover everything, according to Beydullayev. Azerbaijan has voids in coverage in the north, central, and south that require assistance and training.

¶17. (C) Azimov then launched into a lengthy discussion of Leahy Amendment vetting requirements. He stated that there should be trust between two countries and that the Azerbaijani security services do not believe that they should have to share the information requested. Azerbaijan, he promised, will meet all the necessary criteria. Ethan Goldrich, EUR/CARC Office Director, responded by noting that Leahy requirements are not new, are universal and cannot be tailored to an individual country's preferences. Embassy Baku Pol-Econ Chief Rob Garverick reported that Azerbaijan is losing program opportunities and that Azerbaijanis submit essentially the same information required for Leahy vetting when they apply for visas. Azimov said that he had never heard that Leahy is a global requirement. He called Leahy vetting "humiliating". Azerbaijan will submit names and positions, he argued, but no additional information. Azimov noted that these programs are in the strategic interests of both of our countries. His solution was an exchange of dip notes, in which the U.S. asks Azerbaijan to provide candidates with good records, and Azerbaijan responds with a dip note that they promise to do so, and then does the vetting internally. U.S. participants indicated repeatedly that this is a non-starter. Azimov was in high dudgeon over the issue and did not explain why Leahy vetting was an issue now but had not been before.

¶18. (C) Colonel Sachs briefed on defensive military sales and said that Foreign Military Sales (FMS) programs exist and work. Sachs said areas for cooperation exist, noting Azerbaijan,s request for aerial surveillance radars. Azimov complained that Azerbaijan does not know which items are prohibited for sale. He informed the U.S. side that Azerbaijan is working on its next request, which it will send in a week or two.

Bilateral Assistance Programs -----

¶19. (C) ISN/WMDT,s Michael Stafford briefed on the Nuclear Smuggling Outreach Initiative (NSOI). He reminded the Azerbaijanis that the NSOI delegation had begun its engagement with the GOAJ when it met in March with an interagency, MFA-led delegation. At that meeting, the U.S. delegation provided its initial assessment of the GOAJ,s anti-smuggling capabilities, and the Azerbaijani delegation promised a written response. He understood that the GOAJ had performed its own assessment in the course of preparing that response and he requested that the Azerbaijanis share the results. Azimov reacted by passing over the response. Stafford thanked the Azerbaijani side for this paper and said the next step would be for the NSOI delegation to return to

Azerbaijan to develop a Joint Action Plan aimed at improving Azerbaijan,s capabilities.

¶20. (C) OSD,s Monette Melanson briefed on several important accomplishments under the CTR program, including the CRL underway with U.S. oversight and U.S. funding and assistance to the GOAJ in developing a comprehensive capability for Weapons of Mass Destruction surveillance and interdiction on its Caspian Sea maritime border. She noted that the Weapons of Mass Destruction-Proliferation Prevention Initiative (WMD-PPI) maritime border project was coming to an end in December, but said that the U.S. will maintain sustainment activities for an additional two years.

¶21. (C) Eric McPherson of ISN/ECC reported that the current mission of EXBS is to continue cooperation with the Azerbaijani Coast Guard and the Customs Agency. He described support EXBS has provided, including vessels, radars, and training, and mentioned that more than \$500,000 worth of equipment was recently provided to Customs.

¶22. (C) In response, Azimov thanked the U.S. for its assistance and called for the continuation of existing programs. He singled out for praise the Department of Energy,s Second Line of Defense (SLD) programs and contributions by CTR and EXBS. He expressed concern that the NSOI initiative might result in the loss of existing programs, but the U.S. countered that the program would have the opposite effect, with the Joint Action Plan that would be developed specifically calling for the completion of ongoing programs in addition to the creation of new programs to address gaps. Azimov asked for a comprehensive list of the programming that would fall under the proposed Joint Action Plan. Azimov said that one to two months ago he had provided a positive reply to a diplomatic note calling for the expansion of SLD and the Land Border initiative, and he asked for a reply from the U.S. (Note: There was some uncertainty among the Azerbaijanis as to whether the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had responded to the U.S. note).

Closing Remarks

¶23. (C) A/S Shapiro, after thanking the Azerbaijanis for a productive discussion, suggested deliverables. Azimov responded in his remarks that he does not need information on Leahy, just a letter from the U.S. agreeing to his idea that Azerbaijan guarantee that all training candidates meet U.S. human rights criteria. Azimov asked for assistance in providing &publicity for what Azerbaijan has done,⁸ and to tell Congress that &Azerbaijan is important.⁸ Azimov suggested a working-level meeting in six months to discuss progress on issues raised at the Security Dialogue.

¶24. (SBU) The USG proposed to the Embassy of Azerbaijan on November 12 this summary of follow-up priorities that the two sides agreed to during the November 4 security dialogue:

- Azerbaijan will provide a prioritized list of requested arms purchases.
- The United States and Azerbaijan will continue our discussions on critical energy infrastructure security.
- On TEP, Azerbaijan will respond to the U.S. diplomatic note regarding the assessment team visit.
- Azerbaijan will provide a response to the U.S. request to send an assessment team to the Heydar Aliyev International Airport.
- The United States and Azerbaijan will discuss ways to improve our cooperation under the Partnership for Peace (PfP), both in our bilateral discussion and PfP meetings.
- The United States and Azerbaijan will continue cooperation on non-proliferation, border security, and maritime security to build upon prior successful bilateral programs.
- The United States will help Azerbaijan receive information from Afghanistan for Azerbaijan,s proposed border training program.
- The United States and Azerbaijan will attempt to resolve the impasse resulting from the U.S. legal requirements under

the Leahy Law to have biographic data on personnel receiving U.S. training and Azerbaijan,s unwillingness to provide this data.

-- The United States and Azerbaijan will hold a working-level meeting to follow up on recommended actions and assess progress made six months following the dialogue.

Comment

¶25. (C) Azimov proved to be a difficult interlocutor, as demonstrated by his continued suspicion of the proposed assessment team and his continued refusal to provide information needed for Leahy vetting requirements and instead insisting that we should &trust Azerbaijan more.⁸ His refusal disrupts bilateral cooperation and strains our security relationship. In addition, the Azerbaijan Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not yet responded to a request to welcome an assessment team to initiate a TEP program and remains non-committal on accepting any new programs, which was a top priority deliverable for this dialogue.

Delegations

¶26. (SBU)

United States:

Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs Andrew Shapiro
Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Tina Kaidanow
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Russia, Ukraine & Eurasia Celeste Wallander
Ethan Goldrich, Director of Office of Caucasus Affairs & Regional Conflicts, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs
Col. Melvin Sachs, Defense Attache, U.S. Embassy Baku
Robert Garverick, Political-Economic Chief, U.S. Embassy Baku

Azerbaijan:

Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov
Ambassador Yashar Aliyev
Major General Farhad Tagizadeh, Deputy Chief, State Border Service
Major General Ali Shafiyev, Deputy Minister of National Security
Major General Orujali Hajiyev, Deputy Minister of Emergency Services
Major General Mammad Beydullayev, Head of Inspections Department, Ministry of Defense
Major General Guloglan Muradli, Head of General Department on Struggle Against Smuggling and Violation of Customs Rules, State Customs Services
Major Rovshan Karimov, International Military Cooperation Department, Ministry of Defense
Nusrat Suleymanov, Second Secretary, Security Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Colonel Eldar Ismayilov, Defense Attach, Embassy of Azerbaijan
Galib Israfilov, Counselor, Embassy of Azerbaijan
Rashad Afandiyev, First Secretary, Embassy of Azerbaijan
Yegana Balayeva, First Secretary, Embassy of Azerbaijan
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